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## WORDS.

It is an old tale that Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, who lived early in the twelfth century, and was known long after as Saint Anselmo, having a dispute with the Anglo-Norman barons regarding a matter of ecclesiastical authority (of which Anselm, like most of the canonised, was not a little jealous), undertook what was then regarded as perilous—a journey to Rome, in order to obtain the pope's casting vote on his side of the question. This the bishop accomplished to his heart's content, and returned in triumph with a letter written on parchment, after the fashion of the age, commanding the disputants to hear and obey him; but when it was read to them in full assembly, none of the nobility at that period being expected to read for themselves, they unanimously shouted, 'Does the bishop expect that we shall be swayed by a letter! It is nothing but words and sheepskin!'

Little did those fierce and haughty barons dream that, in the same fair counties of England where they exercised the power of pit and gallows, as old chroniclers have it, sheets frailer and more perishable than sheepskin should one day be found too strong for their feudal dungeons and rights of vassalage and serfdom.

'Words and sheepskin' was but the language of despotic barbarism, that knew its physical strength and could see no further; but the power of these things was felt even in the feudal ages. The excommunications that terrified princes; the exhortations by which all Europe was repeatedly roused to the Crusades; the Dooms-Day Book, so dreaded by peer and peasant; and, at the dawn of luckier days, the Magna Charta itself, were but words and sheepskin. The latter has long lost the high place of power, except in law and learning, as represented by certain documents and decrees; the parchment times are past, and at least better promises have come with the age of paper; but words are still, with us, mighty as they have been through all changes, since the tongues of men were confounded, and the darling project of the infant nations was given up for want of an interpreter. When Egypt was a Christian land, ages before either Turk or Saracen was known in history, the sect of Christian Platonists, which flourished chiefly at Alexandria, had among their philosophic questions—and curious ones were they wont to agitate—this query: 'By which of all the distinguishing traits of mankind is the existence of the soul most clearly manifested?' The replies were numerous and very diverse. Some said it was by the cultivation of arts, others by the capability for abstract science; but one philosopher maintained it was principally by the use of words. Nor was his opinion without sound reason: much of our social intercourse, the whole fabric of literature, as well as the communication and diffusion of science, depend on the existence of articulate language.

How small a portion of our knowledge or thoughts can be communicated by sensible signs! The uninstructed deaf and dumb, small as their numbers are, and ought to be, in these days of institutions, could exemplify that fact. The art of delineation, in all its varieties, has in our age reached a perfection never before attained; and it is truly marvellous how much even an ordinary woodcut can be made to express, having, besides, this advantage over literature, that it is addressed to the understanding of the greater number; for he that looks may read. For these reasons, the earliest form of writing among nations who led the way to civilisation consisted of rough draughts or sketches of the scenes and things to which the writer referred: hence came the celebrated hieroglyphics of the Egyptians. That laborious people sculptured their history on pillar and pyramid, and painted their theology and ethics on the walls of their colossal temples, where learned travellers now gaze on figures of old forgotten idols, men in ancient costumes, strange animals, and utensils whose purpose is scarcely discoverable, and try to guess what story they were intended to convey.

The Chinese characters, every one of which represents an entire word, are believed to have had a similar origin; but elaborate and complex though it be, the writing of China is the improvement of centuries on the picture fashion.

Perhaps the most singular description of signs ever practised by any people was in use among the early Peruvians, who kept their records by means of knotted cords, each knot having to the mind of a Peruvian scholar a special signification, according to the mode in which it was fastened. All methods of symbolising must of necessity be meagre and limited. How much of the philosophy, the poetry, and even the history of human life, is there for which the tangible world furnishes us with neither sign nor representative! Hogarth, indeed, has given wit and wisdom to his canvas, and made it utter moral lessons to mankind: other great masters have painted for religion and for history; but art can never go beyond illustration, taking that current but significant term in the highest sense, and as such it has done the world good service.

Words, on the contrary, are nature's own sovereign gift to man—the music of his life, the channel of his thoughts, and the vehicle of his instruction; they alone resemble the soul, for by means of themselves we reason upon them: that power enabled the philosophers of former times to have much speculation and some quarrels touching the origin of their endless variety. Why the Frenchman should say *Dimanche*, and the Englishman *Sunday*, when both mean the very same thing, like sundry other whys and wherefores, remains an unsettled question, though it has been the subject of many a volume. One better known than the most of them, tells us that

God confounded the languages of men; and no matter how the passage be interpreted, its truth is at least practically evident, for the words of nations still differ farther than any matter about them. This was felt and mourned over, especially by the scholars of the seventeenth century, as a barrier to the accumulation of knowledge in individual minds, not to speak of its general increase among mankind, and their favourite desideratum was therefore a universal language. During the middle ages, Latin supplied that deficiency to the learned of all European nations; on which account, as well as because the crude remnants of literature and philosophy then preserved from the wrecks of the classic world were confined to its compass, a grammatical knowledge of Latin was styled 'humanity,' as if that branch of learning alone comprehended all that could raise or distinguish men above the inferior creation. There is reason to fear that the old schoolmen's ideas of humanity, as we use the word, were miserably circumscribed on all points; but the title with their meaning is still retained in our universities, and sounds strangely when we hear of the Professor of Humanity's fees. It is but an instance of the unaccountable change of signification which is apt to pass over the words of any language in a comparatively short space of time. About the days of Elizabeth, 'let' signified to 'hinder,' and a 'novel' meant 'a piece of startling intelligence.'

Thus entire tongues gradually alter as spoken by successive generations, though inhabiting the same country. The progress of refinement, the change of manners, and increased intercourse with foreigners, all contribute to their mutation or improvement. The English of our fathers is not ours in either pronunciation or orthography; and to a person of tolerable education in the present age, Wickliffe and Chaucer would be more difficult to read than Pascal or Klopstock in their original texts. Etymologists have taken considerable pains, and 'used up,' to naturalise an Americanism, much time in tracing out the roots and derivations of words: nor is the study without utility, as it occasionally throws light on the early history and affinities of nations, which, for the greater part, rest in the twilight of unrecorded times; but what Johnson said of his great work the *Lexicon*, occurs to an observer—'It is the drudgery of words.'

Connected with this subject, there was an early and very natural inquiry after the original language of mankind: the classic historians record an experiment made by one of the later kings of Egypt to ascertain it. He placed two infants with a dumb nurse on a solitary isle of the Red Sea, which he commanded no vessel to approach for the space of seven years, except one despatched by himself at intervals to supply provisions, and see that all were well, in hopes of hearing the primeval tongue spoken by those hermit children. At the end of the assigned period, the only word they could utter was found to be the Phrygian for bread; upon which the monarch decided that the tongue of the Phrygians was the oldest on the earth. The old Scottish chronicler commonly known as Pitcottie, mentions an imitation of the Egyptian king's experiment, as performed by James IV. The scene of his operations was an island in the Firth of Forth; and the chronicler naively winds up the tale by observing, 'Some say they spake good Ebrew; but as to myself, I know not, but by the author's report.'

A strange tribute to the power of words has been paid by the popular superstition of every land and race. The Indian on the western prairie, and the Nubian shepherd, alike believe in the mysterious efficacy of spell-words. In the most primitive legends of Asia and the earliest beliefs of western Europe, they occupy a no less important

station. Who has not heard or read some of those traditional tales, that have floated down through many a century and variation, regarding the fearful consequences of certain words uttered inadvertently in perilous vicinity, or forgotten at the moment of supernatural danger! In that old rustic faith, indeed, words seem to govern the spiritual world; and thereby hangs a piece of practical philosophy. Most vulgar errors are but shadows of substantial truth, vague and distorted, yet still reflections of the real. The Catholic peasant's confidence in the verse written on his scapular, as a defence against invisible powers, and the Jew's dread of a cabalistic sentence, are but natural inferences of superstition from the sway which mere words are found to exercise over the human mind; not to enlarge on those mighty effects produced by great orators from pulpit or platform, whence a single speech or sermon has sunk the balance of public opinion, and changed the councils of nations; nor those of volume or pamphlet, that have struck home to the heart of their times, from Don Quixote to Junius. What heart-burnings and hostilities have a few bitter words been known to create in every circle of society! Kings have been dethroned by a jest, wars have been kindled by one boastful sentence, and the bestowment of a nickname has been the seed of a politician's overthrow. The execution done by satires and lampoons is known to all readers of history or biography; nor can they fail to remark how large a share of the thorns and thistles produced by such sowings (and rarely have they a better harvest) has fallen to their authors.

The unwritten records of daily experience bear yet more ample testimony to our subject. Who that has survived life's early lessons, and learned to walk with his generation, cannot recollect many an instance of good neighbourhood interrupted, alliance broken off, and friendship changed into feud, by the same agents whose operation has been noted in higher quarters—a jest, a boast, or an ill-reported tale! Nay, in the silence of individual memory there lies weightier evidence: do not harsh and reproachful words return like perennial tares when the tongues that uttered them are dust! 'The evil that men say lives after them.' Do not the kind words of the long dead come back to make us miss them when things and times are changed? Will not old simple phrases, heard long ago by hearths that are, it may be, dark and distant, at once recall the past, with more of its light than shadow? Truly the tongue, though a small member, boasteth great things, and a greater than human wisdom has warned us to guard it. Words are indeed but the garments of thought, yet, like our personal costume, they exert an amazing influence on its appearance. A fine poem or essay is chiefly valuable for the ideas it contains; but were the very same expressed in inferior or ill-arranged language, they must lose half their power. Some words have a native music in themselves. Madame de Staël, though a foreigner, regarded the English words 'no more' as a sound unequalled in melancholy power.

It is strange to think how long the words may outlast the works of men. *Æsop's Fables* have survived for many a century the city in which he was a slave, and the sayings of the Seven Wise Men of Greece have outlasted all her temples. Our theme grows diffuse and boundless, for before us spread the wide fields of literature, with systems of philosophy, creeds, and controversies—the worldly wars and treasures of the world.

Letters are but words; yet are there any that have never watched and waited for some of them, even in these penny-postage times, and perhaps kept them in old drawers long after, till they read like false prophecy? Good advice is but words; but are there many who never gave, or never took it? He at least understood what was true who said that half the broils of life arose from the general habit of mankind, regarding their own words too little, and those of their neighbours too much. In the days of Lorenzo de Medici, surnamed the Magnificent, when a contest between the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophers occupied all the leisure the Florentines could find from the feuds of the Guelph and Ghibellines,

there arrived in their city a traveller, supposed to be of Greece. He was a learned man for the period, and being introduced to the philosophers, took an active part in their dispute, and one which was long remembered in Florence. At one of the great controversial meetings held under the special patronage of Lorenzo, he argued for the Platonists with such zeal and ability as to all but silence his opponents; and then at once intimating that much could be said on the other side of the question, he maintained the cause of the Aristotelians with no less vigour, and triumphantly refuted all his former arguments.

'How can you thus support two opposite opinions?' demanded the Magnificent Lorenzo.

'It is words, my lord—only words!' said the stranger with a low bow, as he left the astonished assembly. The parting speech of that unscrupulous logician is worthy of the world's remembrance, for the thousand cases in which its truth is manifest. What an amount of disappointment, discomfort, and division, not to speak of strife and all uncharitableness, would be spared to society and most of the members thereof by its practical application!

Perplexed and overburdened crowds, when an orator, who never lived for common sense or decency, talks to you of dying for the rights of man, remember that his patriotism is only words! Ladies, when lovers say you are angels, and they adore you, yet never act as if they thought you either rational or accountable beings, be assured that such professions are only words! Friends that have stood by and with each other through fortune's enmity in times that tried the strong, should quarrels come between you, as come they did between Pylades and Orestes, think how much of your dispute was nothing but words! And thou vassal of many tongues, when making the sacrifice of thine own peace, interest, or, it may be, purer feelings, to 'what people would say,' recollect that it is only words, like the present essay—less than the pope's letter to the Norman barons, and poorer far than sheepskin.

#### SKETCH OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE WASP FAMILY IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

BY MRS CHARLES MEREDITH.

In the warm summer days, during our residence at Port Sorell, and more particularly in the evenings, we had often noticed a large kind of black fly darting in and out of the house with a loud sharp whizzing noise; and on a more attentive observation, we found a most tragic addition made to our list of antipodean contrarieties—nothing less than the discovery of a savage and sanguinary war carried on by flies against spiders, and pursued with such vigour, that one would believe the Tasmanian flies were bent on avenging the tyrannies and grievances suffered at the hands of the spiders by the whole winged-insect family all the world over.

We had observed the forcible and noisy abduction of many an unlucky web-spinner, before I could satisfactorily make out what became of them, as the frequent seizures made, apparently by the same fly, forbade the conclusion of their being forthwith devoured; but by dint of sundry watchings and pursuits of the flies, and by eking out and piecing together my various small scraps of information and discovery, I at length acquired a tolerable knowledge of the habits and practices of my busy black neighbours. In size and shape they exactly resemble a large English wasp, but are wholly black, and possess formidable stings a quarter of an inch long. They build very remarkable cells or nests of earth, finely tempered, and formed in layers of tiny mud-pats, like a swallow's nest. Many of these were placed in a small wooden outhouse, between the upright studs and the boarding of the wall; several were formed on a

shelf in the porch, where some small pieces of wood lying heaped together offered convenient nooks; and one wasp, resolving to have a more costly lodgment than his friends, took possession of a meerschaum pipe-bowl which lay on the same shelf, and very snugly laid out his house in its interior. All the nests I have examined are arranged in the same manner, the whole fabric being from two to three inches long, and about one inch broad, or rather less; the external shape of the mansion, whether square, triangular, or pentagonal, depending a good deal on the site chosen. When completed, no aperture is left; but on being opened, three cells are almost invariably found, the two lesser ones each containing a gray, oval, chrysalis-shaped body; possibly a bag enclosing the eggs. The largest apartment is devoted to the purposes of a larder, and is always found full of spiders, of all varieties of size, colour, and kind, and closely and neatly packed together, with their legs all trussed up, so as to occupy the smallest possible space. The strangest part of the affair is, that the spiders are not dead, but remain perfectly soft and flexible in every part; and on being exposed to the sun and air, or stirred, a feeble movement is evident in them, as though they were paralysed or stupefied in some manner, so as to be unresisting victims, and good fresh meat at the same time. The storehouse is thus well supplied, doubtless for the benefit of the chrysalis tenantry on their awakening to the knowledge of life and appetite.

I have rarely been more interested by any new insect than by these black wasps, ungentle and ferocious though they be; for there is a daring, dashing energy and brisk industry about their ways and doings that was very amusing, and perfectly original. The bee—dear little, hard-working, persevering fellow that he is—can still afford time for many a coquetish peep into blossoms and buds that he deigns not to taste; and even when arrived at home with his two pannier-baskets loaded with their heaped-up golden treasure, can stay for a few moments' friendly hovering to and fro, and pleasant exchanges of hum and buzz with his helpmate the ant, whose ways of thrift and industry even Solomon bids us to 'consider and be wise.' She never takes a straight road, but with a lump of plunder in her nippers, thrice her own size, runs hither and thither, up straws and round sticks, or maybe into a labyrinth of a violet root, where she plays at bo-peep with you for ten minutes before going forward again; and seems to get on in such a perversely roundabout way, that I have only been cured of my inclination to put her straight, by the conviction (after many trials, when anxiously striving to trace out the marauders of my bee-hives) of the utter hopelessness of such attempts. But the black wasp has none of these wandering weaknesses of character: solitary, stern, ruthless, and resolute he goes about his work of cell-building and spider-catching. If you chance to be near his chosen place of abode, you may see him dart past with a bit of mud or a victim; and a shrill sharp whizz—izz—izz is continued for some seconds or a minute, during the operation of packing away his load, when forth he darts again, straight and swift as an arrow, and the next moment very probably invades the peaceful retreat of some cobwebbed recluse, which, until now, safe from housemaids and brooms, has meshed and devoured his flies in comfort, but is at length seized and straightway trussed and packed up, half-alive, by the dark avenger.

The varieties of wasps, or wasp-like flies, which we noticed around Poynton (Port Sorell, V.D.L.) were very numerous. One is marked with alternate golden and black stripes, very similar to the English wasp, but more soft and downy-looking: another is red, long, and slender, with four long wings, and a prodigious sting, which it can protrude nearly half an inch from a kind of double sheath beneath the tail. Another species, partially red, frequented the sandy paths of the garden, where several of them were generally seen darting



along, flying straight up and down the walks. I have sometimes followed them nearly round the garden without their ever quitting the path, or rising more than a foot from the surface. Sometimes I have observed them stop at a hole in the sand, apparently their nest, and after poking down into it, head-foremost and tail up, for a minute or more, they made a great skurry of dust over the opening, so as entirely to conceal it, and flew on again.

Without enumerating many other members of this family, of whom I know little more than their outward aspect, I shall mention one more, which has interested me nearly as much as the architect-wasp first described, and has caused me to waste infinitely more time in vain attempts to pry more nearly into its domestic privacy. At the cottage we first occupied at Port Sorell, I was annoyed to find that the multiflora rose-trees which adorned the veranda had, towards autumn, become quite disfigured, by having large rounded pieces scooped out of nearly every leaf; five or six great scoops being made in each, leaving the middle fibre entire. First I attributed the mischief to caterpillars, and then to grasshoppers; but never found any on the trees. At length the frequent buzzing of a large bee-like fly attracted my attention; and on watching its movements, I detected it in the very act of snipping out a piece of rose-leaf, rolling it up, and grasping it in its legs, and flying off. After this, I observed the work going on in the same manner daily for some time. Plants, raised from cuttings of these same rose-trees, grew round the porch of Poystou, and these were used by the same busy workmen in the same manner, besides other kinds of rose-trees, and the leaves of the cherry, acacia, and other trees. This wasp has a pair of forceps, acting precisely like scissors; and very many times I have closely observed him snipping out, with a quick clean cut, the piece of leaf, which is usually about the third of an inch broad and long; about six or eight seconds suffices for the cutting, when the piece of leaf is most nimbly and adroitly rolled up, and clasped by the feet and legs, as the wasp flies away. I have frequently started off when the wasps flew away, and given chase to them, hoping to find out whither all the leaves were carried, and how they were used; but the depredators always proved too clever for me, and glanced out of sight, leaving me to come panting back again, vainly vowing to be more agile and sharp-sighted next time. Having often found these same insects busy gathering honey, I imagined they had a hoard or nest somewhere near, but never found one. An intelligent young person, who lived with me at this time as nursery governess, told me she had often found the nests, which were holes in the ground, filled with bits of leaves, in which small portions of some sticky sweet stuff, like honey, were folded up and stuck together, only one or two wasps seeming to inhabit each hole. This species, like all my other acquaintances of the wasp kind here, has a long sting, and precisely the head and antennae of the English insect.

A totally different species from any of these frequented the wide sandy sea beaches at Port Sorell; these latter were large, bulky, formidable insects, with great stings like the others, and were often seen on a warm day darting about in twos and threes, just above the surface of the sand. One of them would sometimes hover over the same spot for a minute or two, when another would suddenly dart to the place, and the first wasp instantly took up his station at some distance, hovering as before, until he either displaced another or was superseded in his turn; and the same dance of 'change sides and back again' went on as long as we watched them; but what they were doing, or how they got their living, remained an undiscoverable mystery to me.

It is only just to all these long-stinged wasps to add, that neither we, nor our children, nor servants, were ever stung by any of the fraternity, although we frequently chased and captured them for examination; but

always with a due dread of their threatening weapons of defence, and a careful restoration of their liberty when our curiosity was satisfied.

#### A STORY OF OLD VERSAILLES.

In the latter days of Louis XIV., the favour of *Le Grand Monarque*, or that of Madame de Maintenon, formed the chief dependence of a large portion of his subjects; and numbers of the needy branches of nobility crowded to Versailles in search of patronage and places. Among the thousands who resorted to that temporary metropolis of fashion and royalty, came Monsieur de Theminay, a gentleman of Languedoc, whose extraordinary conduct furnished matter of surprise and remark to all who knew him, at least for the first six months of his residence. He was allied by birth and marriage to some of the most powerful families in the kingdom; possessed of what were called tolerable talents, a cultivated taste, engaging manners, and an estate which just supplied a sort of contracted competence for himself, two grown-up sons, and a daughter. His sons were esteemed promising young men, and some people thought his daughter a beauty; yet with all these motives and appliances for advancing his fortune, M. de Theminay never attended a levee, never manoeuvred for an office, nor sought the favour of either mistress or minister.

M. de Theminay's friends wondered how he intended to provide for his family. Some of them hinted that he was by no means in the way of his duty; but at last it transpired that their prospects had not been so entirely neglected as people imagined—the father having looked to some purpose up the long vista of matrimony on behalf of two of his children, and it was supposed that he trusted in his good fortune to arrange matters similarly for the third. He himself had made two consecutive trials of the blessed state: the first was with a lady of the noble house of Castelaïne, who died early, leaving him a son and daughter; and the second with the daughter of a Languedoc farmer, whose memory he rarely recalled among his friends, for the lady had followed her predecessor in a few years. But she left him a second son; and as the three grew up around his advancing age, M. de Theminay established his family in Versailles.

There he kept a small corner house, quietly respectable in its appearance, and fewer servants than were then thought necessary for a man of his rank; but M. de Theminay said he despised ostentation, and came only to enjoy select society, and complete the education of his children: to which the said society added, that his chief object was to cultivate the good graces of his rich cousins the Faquettes, who resided in a more expensive quarter of the town.

The father of this family had been a farmer-general, who grew rich and resigned his office amid sundry whispers of peculation. The mother was a West Indian heiress, who had been sent from Martinique when very young to De Theminay's brother-in-law, the Abbé Castelaïne, and nobody thought of inquiring further into her birth and parentage. Their only son and daughter inherited a double portion of her West Indian complexion, and a mediocrity of mind which qualified them in all respects for making the poorest possible figure in their age and station. These were deficiencies which even riches could not entirely cover. The family found their footing insecure in the highways of fashion, and the guests of their balls and suppers called them the poor Faquettes.

With the De Theminays, on the contrary, nature had dealt handsomely. The first madame's children, Auguste and Valerie, were as like each other as brother and sister could be. Tall, finely moulded, and graceful, each had the same distinguished air and dignified yet pleasing address. Valerie was naturally esteemed the most beautiful: she was just nineteen, and her brother twenty-one. In their characters there was also a strong resemblance: both were generous and enthusiastic, sensitive, high-spirited, and somewhat imperious; but the latter defect was overlooked, in consideration of the world of small talents which they shared between them.

M. de Theminay was proud of his two elder children, and they were no less so of each other; which, combined with their similarity of disposition, made them closer and more confidential companions than brother and sister usually were in the courtly town of Versailles; and as both piqued themselves on being descended from the noble house of Castelaïne, they had learned from infancy to look with a sort of exclusiveness on their younger brother, of whom M. de Theminay was not in the least proud. His mother had got her own way for once, in calling him by the old peasant name of Justin; and he had grown up neither beautiful nor plain, but a thoughtful, manly-looking youth of sixteen, whose time was spent between the city streets and the Cordeliers' seminary for young gentlemen, where, as his father remarked, he might remain till something turned up.

For the senior two, the old gentleman had long since turned up something in earnest. 'Auguste will marry Claire, and Valerie Jean Faquette,' had been his early consolation. 'The creatures will have large fortunes, and these must not be lost to the family.' Such thoughts were imparted, though in very different words, to the retired farmer-general; and as the shine was all with the De Theminays, and the solids all with the Faquettes, the latter gradually entertained the proposal till it came to be regarded as a settled arrangement. Dissenters were, however, found in the parties most concerned. Auguste and Valerie had what their father called a singular prejudice against mercenary matches, and early discovered that there was no congeniality of taste or feeling between them and their cousins, whom everybody voted dull and uninteresting; but M. de Theminay was accustomed to take his ease in life's inn. The matrimonial scheme was therefore understood rather than expressed; and as the brilliant brother and sister had no objection to patronising and being admired in a quiet way by the Faquettes, who looked up to them as chiefs of their line, he read the papers, played chess, and went from soirée to theatre, putting his trust in time to teach his boy and girl the value of louis-d'ors.

A year had thus passed when M. de Theminay found out that his family hairdresser was too old for business; and Madame Faquette recommended another, an honest skilful Gascon, who, with his wife and daughter, had lately come from Paris, where trade was not so good as it had been. His abilities were tested for the first time on the night in which all Versailles crowded to the Théâtre du Roi, to see the new tragedy of Florimer d'Arignon, such being the fashionable designation of an author who promised to become the 'lion' of the season. The tragedy was successful, as a tragedy could be only under the Grand Monarque. It was called 'Semiramis,' remote classical subjects being then in favour; and exhibited such sayings and doings of that ancient princess as occasioned weeping in the galleries, fainting in the pit, and sent half the ladies in the boxes off in violent hysterics. The curtain fell amidst thunders of applause, which were followed by shouts for the author, whom the manager, in self-defence, was obliged to point out where he sat in a stage-box. An immediate rush was made towards it by some enthusiastic spirits, in order to crown him *à la Voltaire*; but the attempt was unseconded, an old poet having suggested the propriety of waiting for another tragedy.

The author rose to make the customary acknowledgments; and Valerie, as she waved a handkerchief damp with tears and extract of roses, saw a small slender youth, who might have passed for a monk of La Trappe, his face so pale, spare, and melancholy, but for a pair of brilliant eyes and an expensively-laced waistcoat. Valerie could not hear his words, but she caught the young poet's eye, and half her friends told her afterwards in confidence that they could not help thinking the speech addressed to herself.

Auguste and she were moving slowly to their carriage through the noisy crowd of the emptying theatre, with monsieur and Justin close behind them, when a thin brownish hand was thrust through the moving mass with a small billet, which the latter took and quietly de-

posited in his pocket. The transaction was so rapid that it escaped the father's eyes, though not those of Auguste, who chanced to look back; but the next moment his attention was arrested by a faint scream in the opposite direction, and pressing forward, they found a young girl stretching her arms in vain to some one from whom she had been parted in the throng, while a large town porter made his footing sure on her muslin robe, and a whole squadron of chairmen pushed past her in haste to pick up fares. A word from the laced and sword-wearing nobleman was sufficient to make the porter change his position and the chairmen pause; while a man, calling for his dear Ambroisine, made his way back, and drew the girl's arm once more within his own: it was the Gascon hairdresser, and loud was his gratitude to the young gentleman for troubling himself about his poor girl. She was his only child, was never used to such places; but she loved poetry and plays, and he had brought her to see the new tragedy. The girl seemed almost a child as she clung to her father's arm, small, round, and rosy, a gem of a brunette, and dressed with a simplicity and elegance rarely adopted by the taste of her class. The De Theminays gave the father and daughter the benefit of their company till fairly out of the precincts of the theatre, and then sent them on their homeward way, proud and happy with kind words and good advices. Auguste handed his sister to the carriage, but his last look was cast on the retreating figure of Ambroisine.

From that night the brother and sister had other things to think of besides their dark-coloured cousins. Valerie was introduced to the poet at a *conversazione* on the following evening, and they talked together half an hour on the Scudery romances. He was somewhat eccentric in manners, said to be the last of a noble but far-reduced family, who had left him nothing but their name, and a romantic disregard for everything but love and fame. These peculiarities secured the popularity his tragedy had won. The ennuied world of Versailles were delighted with the freshness of that earnest mind; nothing so new had been seen for a considerable time, and patronage, friends, and flatteries poured in from all sides on the favourite of the hour. Flirtation was never considered proper for any but married ladies in France, so Valerie did not flirt; but her days were thenceforth spent in reading the poets from Homer downwards, and her evenings in listening to Florimer d'Arignon. The poet was not insensible to so much attraction and taste; his appreciation of both was shown in a thousand small but flattering ways. He addressed the greater part of his conversation and a brilliant copy of verses to the lady. Valerie treasured the latter in her jewel-drawer, and never forgot that somebody said they had been made for each other. There were other circumstances which threatened the paternal plans still more: Auguste's attentions to his cousin had never been very pointed, but of late their falling off was manifest, and a singular change had come over the habits of the young man. He who everybody said, and himself believed, was formed to shine in society, grew careless of balls and heedless of soirées; besides, he began to talk in a depreciating tone of the advantages of birth and fortune; spoke mysteriously of noble qualities concealed by an inferior station, and a wealth of soul which the world never knew. Valerie wondered at all this; but one day finding her brother had forgotten to lock his escritoire, she peeped in, as sisters will do, and found a small letter addressed to Auguste in a fine female hand. The opportunity was irresistible, and Valerie read. It was an answering epistle, full of most tender sentiments beautifully expressed, and signed with the name of Ambroisine Dupré. Could a hairdresser's daughter so think and write? The rest of the secret was soon reached. Auguste told her how he had been struck by the young girl's simple beauty at the theatre on that crowded night; how he had seen her afterwards on the street, and at the windows; and at length sent her a bouquet, for which he received a billet of thanks, revealing at once an education far above her rank, and talents rare in any station. Some letters and many interviews had passed between them since then; in short, Auguste was desperately in

love. He described her modesty, her candour, and her affection for him, till Valerie herself was charmed, especially with the letters which he bade her read, that she might see the heart and soul of his Ambroisine; adding that their personal interviews, however delightful, were hardly as yet as satisfactory, since a profound sensibility kept the girl almost silent in his presence.

That was a moment of mutual outpouring: Auguste admired the poet, and Valerie promised to befriend his Ambroisine. While the brother and sister thus freely discussed their own affairs, they were equally puzzled over those of another. Who had given Justin that billet at the theatre!—and what did it contain! The boy had evidently a secret of his own; they had heard of him being seen in the suburbs of the town at extraordinary hours; few of his evenings were passed at home, though the worthy Cordelier occasionally lamented that he was too much attached to his father's house. Auguste and Valerie were above prying; their younger brother was half a stranger to them; but they felt themselves called upon to watch over his youth for the honour of the family.

Doubtless it was for similar reasons that other eyes soon began to take cognisance of their proceedings. As the poet's partiality for Valerie grew more expressive, and Auguste's visits to the hairdresser's more frequent, suspicions crept into the mind of M. de Theminey, and the Faquettes put on the looks of ill-used people. The old gentleman of course set himself to observe, and discoveries more true than pleasing rewarded his vigilance; piece by piece the whole story came out, and the consequence was, an explosion of wrath never before heard in the quiet house of the Themineys.

About this period Versailles found a new subject of conversation, in a woman who had lately taken up her abode in one of those suburban cottages remaining since the place was a village with straggling hamlets round it in the wide plain. She was known as Madame Le Sage, and her ostensible profession was that of a letter-writer; a vocation still very common in France, but then particularly rare in the hands of women. Madame Le Sage was, however, esteemed the mistress of her art, and with the fame of her epistolary accomplishments were bound up matters far more attractive to public curiosity. Her letters were said to be lucky; some insisted that none of them ever missed their object, and instances were whispered about of families of the first distinction who employed her pen under that impression. Madame Le Sage, besides, could afford information on futurity. The faith in fortune-telling was a characteristic of that otherwise doubting age; it prevailed among the best-educated ranks, and sceptical philosophers were not free from it. The ordinary practice was forbidden by the French laws; but madame's mode consisted in a kind of lottery, in which the parties drew for themselves; and marvellous tales were soon afloat regarding the truth of her revelations.

There were personal wonders too; the lady came last from Paris, but nobody knew anything of her previous history. She had the face of a Jewess, with a dark complexion, and almost dwarfish stature: though apparently not older than thirty, her hair was perfectly white, and she wore it combed down straight to her waist, but secured by a thin silver band across the forehead; she was deficient in a hand, and some said in a foot also, for she walked with a silver-headed cane, and wore a very long brown dress, with loose hanging sleeves, in the Oriental fashion; rarely leaving the solitary cottage where she lived with her only attendant, an elderly woman, large and gaunt in person, and blunt to a degree of surliness in her manner. The pair soon furnished half the gossip of the place. Their cottage was visited by persons of all ranks. It was whispered that Madame Maintenon had gone there to ask about the king's death, and the dauphiness to inquire after madame's dismissal; but more than two were never admitted together on any pretext; and such was the effect produced by the elder dame who acted as portress, that the most unruly of the young nobility did not dare infringe the order. Scandal never emanated from that quarter; but a total change of conduct was

remarked in many of the visitors; and those who went with the most careless curiosity, were ever after apt to look grave when the subject was mentioned.

It was the season of the Carnival, and that festival was in those days celebrated in Versailles with almost Italian extravagance. By way of instalment for the strict Lent which followed, merriment and masquerading were the order of the day; and the evening concluded with a public masqued ball at the palace, and an entertainment given by either master or servants at every second house in the city; but M. de Theminey's stood quiet and dark. He had given his servants leave to spend the evening with their friends, and gone with his whole family to partake of the festivities at the palace. Some two hours had passed, and those who saw the old dervise (Theminey always thought that character convenient) spying among the satin-clothed shepherdesses and bowing satyrs who thronged the splendid saloons, knew as little as himself that the son and daughter of whom he was in search had taken the opportunity to put in execution a design agreed on that very morning, and were then, with the addition of masks and black dominoes, on their way to Madame Le Sage.

The cottage stood alone in an old vineyard—now within the liberties of the town—and at the end of a lane inhabited by Jews and pawnbrokers. It was low, but strongly built of black oak timber, and it had stood since the wars of the League. The hearts of the brother and sister were almost as audible as their knock. They did not absolutely believe in madame's lottery, but they were about to inquire for themselves; and even an imaginary glance at the future has something of fearful interest. The massive door was noiselessly opened, just sufficient to show the grim portress with a lamp in her hand. Auguste presented the well-known fee, and whispered that they wished to see madame. The dame admitted them without a word, locked the door, pocketed the key, and made them a sign to follow her through a narrow passage, which seemed to run the whole length of the cottage, as there was a window still open at the farther end, and three fast shut doors on each side. At the middle one on the right their conductress paused, and opening it with another key from her evidently well-furnished pocket, she growled—'There is madame in her office.'

It was a small room paved with coloured tiles in old rustic fashion; the furniture was simple; and in the centre, nearly under a brass lamp which hung from the ceiling, sat that wondrous woman, exactly as they had heard her described, with the brown dress, long white hair, and dark Oriental face; her one arm, covered by a sleeve far beyond where the fingers should have been, rested on her lap, and the other hand on a plain writing-table before her, containing the only professional apparatus to be seen, except a huge old-fashioned cabinet of walnut wood close by, on which an illuminated manuscript lay open over two projecting drawers. One of these was distinguished by some inscription on a brass label; and the other was ornamented with a brazen hand in the act of writing.

'Your business?' said the lady, looking up carelessly as they entered. Auguste again deposited the fees, and intimated that they had come to consult the lottery.

'Hand me down that volume then,' said she, pointing to the manuscript. Auguste did so: it was large, and the characters, though Roman, seemed old and quaint.

'Which will draw first?' inquired madame as she turned over the leaves.

'I,' said Valerie, whose courage was now up.

'There are three questions,' continued madame in the same grave and business-like tone; 'and I may as well observe, that the truth of your drawing depends on that of your answers. What are the day and year of your birth? To what rank do you belong? And what is your religion?'

Valerie replied; and madame wrote her answers slowly on a small slip of paper: then handing her another, she said, 'Write here what you wish to inquire at the cards, and remember you can ask but three questions at once.'

With as firm fingers as she could command, Valerie



wrote, 'Will my lover be fortunate in life! Shall I ever be united to him! And will it be with my father's consent!'

Madame glanced over it to see that all was right, and then folding up the papers together, she said, 'Place them in the drawer of the brazen hand.' Valerie dropped them in: the drawer was unlocked and empty. 'Lock it,' said madame, handing her the key. 'Your number is eight, according to your birthday; you must therefore wait eight minutes,' pointing to a small chronometer on the table, and she immediately began to read aloud from the manuscript. It was a strange tongue, but Auguste afterwards said that he believed it to have been the old Provençal language. Now in prose, now in rhyme, the lady read; and the listeners thought that, in the pauses, they could hear a low rustling sound, as if of lightly-moved papers within the cabinet. Never were eight minutes so long in passing as those to Valerie; but the hand of the chronometer measured them out at last, and madame, like one who had finished a troublesome task, laid down the manuscript, and making a gesture to the other drawer, said, 'Pull it out—it needs no key—and take the three cards that have edged up, for they are your own.'

Valerie pulled out the drawer. It was covered in, all but a small space in the centre, in which a bundle of cards, about the size of an ordinary pack, was inserted, with the edges uppermost. Three of them stood about half an inch above the rest, and these Valerie drew out under the eye of madame, who commanded her instantly to close the drawer, and then proceeded in the same fashion with Auguste.

The business was done almost as quickly as it could be told. Madame bade them good-night, and the door-keeping dame showed them out in the style of their entrance. Valerie thought she heard something ring sharply on the tile floor as they left the passage, but her watch was still in its place, and other cares on her mind.

The brother and sister had mutually remarked the perplexity of each other's face while they read their cards by the brazen lamp, but Auguste was the first to break silence.

'Were the cards propitious, Valerie?' said he.

'Why, yes; it seems so. But there's something strange,' whispered his sister.

'Strange enough,' he resumed. 'Let us compare notes. My questions were, as you know, similar to yours; every card has answered one of them in a sort of affirmative; but, Valerie, it is with sentences from Ambrosine's letters. I know them well, having read and admired them a thousand times.'

'Brother,' interrupted Valerie, 'every question of mine has been answered with a verse of those Florimer addressed to me: judge if I could mistake them!'

The pair wondered and surmised the long way home. No one had yet returned; but just as Auguste produced his key, Valerie exclaimed, 'I have lost my mother's miniature!'

The girl referred to a rich locket, set with brilliants, containing a portrait of her dead mother, by whom it had been hung round her neck, with a fond injunction to wear it for her sake.

'It was that I heard fall,' she continued, 'when leaving the cottage. Brother, we will go back. I would not lose it for half the jewels in Versailles—in such a place too.'

Auguste murmured something about searching the sea; but back they went. The night was by this time well advanced, and the principal thoroughfares began to be thronged with the returning revellers. Auguste recollected that there was a quieter way which he believed led to the cottage. It lay through back lanes and wynds, where congregated the offscourings of society, which Versailles had won from Paris with court and fashion. It was up one dark narrow street and down another with them, till at length they unexpectedly emerged from the dirtiest wynd of all at the very back of the cottage.

There was no light to be seen but one slender quivering ray which glanced from the nearest window. 'On approaching, they guessed it to be that of the passage; but

all beyond was dark. There were sounds of merriment within, too, that rose and fell upon the gusty night. An accidental push informed Valerie that the window was unfastened.

'I will go in, sister,' said Auguste, half wild with curiosity; and almost with the words he pushed back the narrow sash, which opened, in the French manner, like a door, and stepped lightly over the sill. The fear of remaining alone outside, and a boundless anxiety to know what was going forward, made Valerie follow him with surprising silence and rapidity. Her hand came in contact with the handle of a door on one side of the passage, from which the sounds came more distinctly. They were bursts of shrill laughter, intermingled with grave and angry tones, which seemed familiar to their ears. At the loudest peak Valerie turned the handle, the door opened, and both glided into an apartment half lighted from another door in the corner, which stood some inches open. The brother and sister approached, and held their breath. The shadow of that huge cabinet partly concealed the aperture, for they looked into madame's office. There sat the lady herself, still under the brazen lamp; but the fillet of silver and long silvery hair were gone, leaving only a close black crop. The writing-table had given place to one occupied with the remains of a supper, and opposite her sat their own brother Justin! There was a bundle of letters in his hand, and Auguste's look grew black as it caught the back of the uppermost. 'So,' said Justin, continuing his conversation, while the Theminays stood within two yards of him, 'the letters you wrote for the hairdresser's daughter were to my brother, and you never told me, friends as we have been!'

'What end would it serve, my dear!' said madame, apparently much amused: 'if one would mind everybody's relations in this world, business could never go on; and you know there might have been kinder relations than the branches of Castelaïne.'

'But,' said Justin, 'Auguste has been terribly deceived.'

'Yes, by his silly vanity!' interrupted madame. 'What else could have made him imagine that the girl who listened to him like an oracle, and sat silent and simpering in his presence, could ever comprehend one word or thought of such letters! Vanity, my dear fellow, believe me, is the root and foundation of full two-thirds of all the world calls romantic attachments. It was the self-same thing that made his sister—I forget the girl's name—fall in love with Riviere's son, when he turned out a great poet, and wrote verses to her as well as for my cards.' I wish he and his mother had finished their carnival—they always like to keep it in their old way. Poor soul, how drunk she will be to-night! But it is well the knocking hour is past, since there are two of us here.'

'And what matter!' cried Justin in rising wrath.

'Oh,' said the lady, 'there was a Jew at Presburg who knew the Cabala, and showed me that four was my unlucky number, so I shouldn't like the admission of two; and none care to come singly, you know. I wish the Theminays had this trinket back,' she continued, pulling out of her wide sleeve the very miniature of which Valerie was on search; 'they will miss it, but it is best to dispose of those letters.'

'They are mine!' shouted Auguste, bounding into the very centre of the room; at the same moment madame made a snatch, which told of no lameness, at the lamp. It was extinguished in an instant, leaving all in utter darkness. They heard the slamming of doors, and the sound of retreating footsteps. Valerie had followed, and grasped her brother's hand in the gloom; but terror came over them both, and they made for the open window. Their exit was still quicker than their entrance; and knowing that nothing more could be done, the brother and sister hurried home. They reached the house worn out and splashed with mud. M. de Theminay had returned, and the whole household were alarmed at their absence. The servants did their best, but they could not catch a word of the explanation, which was given with closed doors; and early next morning Auguste returned to the cottage accompanied by a police-officer.

They found it open and deserted: the furniture, including that huge cabinet, was still there; but the lamp, the brasses of the mysterious drawers, the cards, and every scrap of written paper were gone.

Auguste examined the cabinet curiously. The interior was like a small closet, with a few drawers at the top strangely supplied with slits and sliding divisions; and in the first he opened lay Valerie's locket. That cabinet eventually passed into the hands of the prefect of police, who soon after became remarkably inquisitive regarding the whereabouts of Madame Le Sage and her portress; but neither ever appeared within his jurisdiction.

Among the many explanations of the wonder-working lottery offered on the occasion, it was conjectured that Madame Le Sage had been in the habit of keeping a person concealed in the cabinet for the purpose of arranging the cards according to her directions, which she gave in a mutually-known language while pretending to read from the manuscript. Certain it was that her extended business as a letter-writer must have made madame acquainted with family and individual secrets, which she seemed to have taken an unaccountable pleasure in revealing by means of her cards to the parties from whom they were most anxiously kept, and to that circumstance alone much of her power was owing.

After her departure, the poet was never seen in Versailles; his admirers said he had retired from society in disgust; but a well-known scholar subsequently recognised 'Semiramis' in an antiquated Italian tragedy. The utmost efforts of the police, and the inquiries of the many interested, failed to throw any light on the past history of the trio whom public rumour gradually connected, except that three persons answering to their description had formerly resided at Avignon, in the house of an old Jewish rabbi some years deceased, and supposed to have come originally from Rome. The same party was afterwards traced through many of the great towns of Europe in a variety of nondescript professions, to which, however, fortune-telling in some shape was always united.

The most extraordinary part of the affair as regarded the Theminays was Justin's connection with it. How the solitary and neglected boy had made such an acquaintance as Madame Le Sage, or what part he took in her affairs, was never exactly ascertained by either Auguste or Valerie. Justin could not be found for weeks and months from that eventful night: the search and inquiries of his family were equally fruitless, till at length one day his Cordelier instructor made a private communication to M. de Theminay, the reported substance of which was that the boy had joined their order in a Breton monastery; and monsieur observed, when speaking of the subject, that his son had always a religious tendency. The old gentleman was still better pleased when, as time wore away, bearing with it the reports and impressions of those events, his son and daughter rapidly renewed acquaintance with their wealthy cousins; and a few days before the following Carnival, the double wedding was celebrated with great splendour, to the delight of all parties. The duties of his profession were fulfilled on that occasion with more than ordinary elegance by Ambroisine's father, who remarked that his poor girl was also about to be married to the man of her choice, and his own apprentice.

#### REMAINS OF NINEVEH.\*

It seems to be the privilege of our age, not merely to produce the most extraordinary amount of interesting history itself, but to effect the recovery of some of the most remarkable, though heretofore lost, passages of ancient history. We have already seen the early events of some of the great extinct monarchies of the East read off from monuments and inscriptions, and one or two

thousand years thus added to the entire history of mankind. Now another, and perhaps the greatest of these primitive states is, as it were, raised from the grave, and made to tell its own story. The vale of the Tigris, one of the most fertile spots of the earth, is, as is well known, now occupied only by a scattered Arabian population under the Turkish government. Travellers have made known to us the existence of great mounds in several places—the supposed ruins of the ancient Assyrian cities and palaces; but this was mere conjecture. Not a single building existed which could be referred to the ancient empire. The very site of Nineveh, which Jonah saw a city of three days' journey in circuit, was uncertain. So early as the days of Xenophon, desolation and barbarism had resumed their reign over this once magnificent country. At the same time, scarcely any authentic memorials had come down to us of Assyrian history: we knew little but that there had once been a great empire in this valley; that it had personages called Ninus, Semiramis, and Belus connected with it, and had sunk under the Persian empire, while kings were still reigning over the infant city of Rome. It was reserved for British enterprise, within the last four years, to turn the darkness which had settled on this subject into something like light.

The present work gives an account of the arduous task which Mr Layard was induced to undertake in 1845, of exploring the great mounds under which the ruins of Assyria were supposed to be buried. He at first acted on his own responsibility; but when some success had been attained, the countenance and assistance of the government were extended to him. Still, at all times he had to contend with great difficulties, the chief of which lay in the barbarism of the native government and its subjects, one-half of whom are the plunderers of the rest. His first work was the trenching of the great mound called Nimroud, situated on the tongue of land formed by the junction of the Zab with the Tigris. To his great delight he found the walls of a series of palaces, containing huge idols, sculptures in bas-relief and paintings, and many minor objects, helping to throw a light upon the history as well as manners of the Assyrians. It was an astounding resurrection, bringing things before the gaze of mankind which had been covered over and thrown into utter oblivion before the days of Alexander. Afterwards Mr Layard effected similar excavations at Kalah Sherghat, a place farther down the river, and on the west bank; likewise at Kouyunjik, near Mosul. Meanwhile similar works had been proceeding, but on a less happy method, at Khorsabad, under the care of a French consul. Mr Layard at length determined that the ancient Nineveh had stood on the left or east bank of the Tigris, one side of it bordering on the river between Kouyunjik and Nimroud, while the other lay between Khorsabad and Karamles, a sort of lozenge-formed square of about sixty miles in entire circuit. The ruins at these places were but the remains of the principal public buildings; the rest of the city had left no memorial above the general level of the soil. Ultimately, Mr Layard succeeded in shipping off some of the principal remains to England, for the British Museum; and it has since been the employment of his leisure to compose a narrative of the whole proceedings, as well as a view of ancient Assyria, as now revealed to us by the result of his labours. Of the book we must pronounce that it is as creditable to his taste and intelligence, as the excavations were to his courage and diplomatic skill. It is amply illustrated with drawings and plans.

The most striking objects exhumed by Mr Layard were colossal figures of bulls, with wings and human heads, or else lions similarly furnished, which stood beside the portals of the palaces; realisations, no doubt, of some of the leading religious or moral ideas of the Assyrians. Some of these have been sent home. Slabs, with bas-reliefs and inscriptions in cuneiform letters, rank next in importance. They present kings in battle, or returning from it; sieges and captures of cities; horse-

\* *Nineveh and its Remains, with an Account of a Visit to the Chaldean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis or Devil Worshipers; and an Inquiry into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians.* By Austen Henry Layard, Esq. D.C.L. 2 vols. London: Murray. 1848.



men pursuing one another; and so forth; all in a rich and not incorrect style of art, though wanting the grouping and expression given by the modern sculptor. But let Mr Layard himself give a general description of Nimroud, as it appeared when the excavations were about to cease:—'We descend about twenty feet, and suddenly find ourselves between a pair of colossal lions, winged and human-headed, forming a portal. I have already described my feelings when gazing for the first time on these majestic figures. Those of the reader would probably be the same, particularly if accompanied by the reflection, that before those wonderful forms Ezekiel, Jonah, and others of the prophets stood, and Sennacherib bowed; that even the patriarch Abraham himself may possibly have looked upon them.'

'In the subterranean labyrinth which we have reached, all is bustle and confusion. Arabs are running about in different directions; some bearing baskets filled with earth, others carrying the water-jars to their companions. The Chaldeans or Tiyyari, in their striped dresses and curious conical caps, are digging with picks into the tenacious earth, raising a dense cloud of fine dust at every stroke. The wild strains of Kurdish music may be heard occasionally issuing from some distant part of the ruins; and if they are caught by the parties at work, the Arabs join their voices in chorus, raise the war-cry, and labour with renewed energy. Leaving behind us a small chamber, in which the sculptures are distinguished by a want of finish in the execution, and considerable rudeness in the design of the ornaments, we issue from between the winged lions, and enter the remains of the principal hall. On both sides of us are sculptured gigantic winged figures; some with the heads of eagles, others entirely human, and carrying mysterious symbols in their hands. To the left is another portal, also formed by winged lions. One of them has, however, fallen across the entrance, and there is just room to creep beneath it. Beyond this portal is a winged figure, and two slabs with bas-reliefs; but they have been so much injured that we can scarcely trace the subject upon them. Further on there are no traces of wall, although a deep trench has been opened. The opposite side of the hall has also disappeared, and we only see a high wall of earth. On examining it attentively, we can detect the marks of masonry; and we soon find that it is a solid structure built of bricks of unbaked clay, now of the same colour as the surrounding soil, and scarcely to be distinguished from it.'

'The slabs of alabaster, fallen from their original position, have, however, been raised; and we tread in the midst of a maze of small bas-reliefs, representing chariots, horsemen, battles, and sieges. Perhaps the workmen are about to raise a slab for the first time; and we watch with eager curiosity what new event of Assyrian history, or what unknown custom or religious ceremony, may be illustrated by the sculpture beneath.'

'Having walked about one hundred feet amongst these scattered monuments of ancient history and art, we reach another doorway, formed by gigantic winged bulls in yellow limestone. One is still entire; but its companion has fallen, and is broken into several pieces: the great human head is at our feet.'

'We pass on without turning into the part of the building to which this portal leads. Beyond it we see another winged figure, holding a graceful flower in its hand, and apparently presenting it as an offering to the winged bull. Adjoining this sculpture we find eight fine bas-reliefs. There is the king hunting, and triumphing over the lion and wild bull; and the siege of the castle, with the battering-ram. We have now reached the end of the hall, and find before us an elaborate and beautiful sculpture, representing two kings standing beneath the emblem of the supreme deity, and attended by winged figures. Between them is the sacred tree. In front of this bas-relief is the great stone platform, upon which, in days of old, may have been placed the throne of the Assyrian monarch, when he received his captive enemies or his courtiers.'

'To the left of us is a fourth outlet from the hall, formed by another pair of lions. We issue from between them, and find ourselves on the edge of a deep ravine, to the north of which rises, high above us, the lofty pyramid. Figures of captives bearing objects of tribute—ear-rings, bracelets, and monkeys—may be seen on walls near this ravine; and two enormous bulls, and two winged figures above fourteen feet high, are lying on its very edge.'

'As the ravine bounds the ruins on this side, we must return to the yellow bulls. Passing through the entrance formed by them, we enter a large chamber surrounded by eagle-headed figures. At one end of it is a doorway guarded by two priests or divinities, and in the centre another portal with winged bulls. Whichever way we turn, we find ourselves in the midst of a nest of rooms; and without an acquaintance with the intricacies of the place, we should soon lose ourselves in this labyrinth. The accumulated rubbish being generally left in the centre of the chambers, the whole excavation consists of a number of narrow passages, panelled on one side with slabs of alabaster, and shut in on the other by a high wall of earth, half buried, in which may here and there be seen a broken vase, or a brick painted with brilliant colours. We may wander through these galleries for an hour or two, examining the marvellous sculptures, or the numerous inscriptions that surround us. Here we meet long rows of kings, attended by their eunuchs and priests—there lines of winged figures, carrying fir-cones and religious emblems, and seemingly in adoration before the mystic tree. Other entrances, formed by winged lions and bulls, lead us into new chambers. In every one of them are fresh objects of curiosity and surprise. At length, wearied, we issue from the buried edifice by a trench on the opposite side to that by which we entered, and find ourselves again upon the naked platform. We look around in vain for any traces of the wonderful remains we have just seen, and are half inclined to believe that we have dreamed a dream, or have been listening to some tale of Eastern romance.'

The great antiquity of the objects brought to light is shown by some curious facts. Perhaps the most curious revelation of all is that which follows, betraying a comparative antiquity in a series of objects, very much in the manner of geological chronology. 'In the centre of the mound [at Nimroud],' says Mr Layard, 'I had in vain endeavoured to find traces of building. Except the obelisk, two winged figures, and a few fragments of yellow limestone, which appeared to have formed part of a gigantic bull or lion, no remains of sculpture had yet been discovered. On excavating to the south, I found a well-formed tomb, built of bricks, and covered with a slab of alabaster. It was about five feet in length, and scarcely more than eighteen inches in breadth in the interior. On removing the lid, parts of a skeleton were exposed to view; the skull and some of the larger bones were still entire; but on an attempt being made to move them, they crumbled into dust. With them were three earthen vessels. A vase of reddish clay, with a long narrow neck, stood in a dish of such delicate fabric, that I had great difficulty in removing it entire. Over the mouth of the vase was placed a bowl or cup, also of red clay. This pottery appears to have stood near the right shoulder of the body. In the dust which had accumulated round the skeleton, were found beads and small ornaments belonging to a necklace. The beads are of opaque-coloured glass, agate, cornelian, and amethyst. A small crouching lion of lapis-lazuli, pierced on the back, had been attached to the end of the necklace. The vases and ornaments are Egyptian in their character, being identical with similar remains found in the tombs of Egypt, and preserved in collections of antiquities from that country. With the beads was a cylinder, on which is represented the king in his chariot, hunting the wild bull, as in the bas-relief from the north-west palace. The surface of the cylinder has been so much worn and

injured, that it is difficult to distinguish the figures upon it. A copper ornament resembling a modern seal, two bracelets of silver, and a pin for the hair, were also discovered. I carefully collected and preserved these interesting remains, which seemed to prove that the body had been that of a female.

'On digging beyond this tomb, I found a second, similarly constructed, and of the same size. In it were two vases of highly-glazed green pottery, elegant in shape, and in perfect preservation. Near them was a copper mirror and a copper lustral spoon, all Egyptian in form.

'Many other tombs were opened, containing vases, plates, mirrors, spoons, beads, and ornaments. Some of them were built of baked bricks, carefully joined, but without mortar; others were formed by large earthen sarcophagi, covered with an entire alabaster slab, similar to those discovered in the south-east corner of the mound, and already described.

'Having carefully collected and packed the contents of the tombs, I removed them, and dug deeper into the mound. I was surprised to find, about *five feet beneath them*, the remains of a building. Walls of unbaked bricks could still be traced; but the slabs with which they had been cased were no longer in their places, being scattered about without order, and lying mostly with their faces on the flooring of baked bricks. Upon them were both sculptures and inscriptions. Slab succeeded to slab; and when I had removed nearly twenty tombs, and cleared away the earth from a space about fifty feet square, the ruins which had been thus uncovered presented a very singular appearance. Above one hundred slabs were exposed to view, packed in rows, one against the other, as slabs in a stone-cutter's yard, or as the leaves of a gigantic book. Every slab was sculptured; and as they were placed in a regular series, according to the subjects upon them, it was evident that they had been moved, in the order in which they stood, from their original positions against the walls of sun-dried brick, and had been left as found preparatory to their removal elsewhere. That they were not thus arranged before being used in the building for which they had been originally sculptured, was evident from the fact, proved beyond a doubt by repeated observation, that the Assyrians carved their slabs after, and not before, they were placed. Subjects were continued on adjoining slabs, figures and chariots being divided in the centre. There were places for the iron brackets, or dove-tails. They had evidently been once filled, for I could still trace marks and stains left by the metal. To the south of the centre bulls were two gigantic figures, similar to those discovered to the north.

'These sculptures resembled in many respects some of the bas-reliefs found in the south-west palace, in which the sculptured face of the slab was turned, it will be remembered, towards the walls of unbaked bricks. It appeared, therefore, that the centre building had been destroyed to supply materials for the construction of this edifice. But here were tombs *over* the ruins. The edifice had perished; and in the earth and rubbish accumulating above its remains, a people, whose funeral vases and ornaments were identical in form and material with those found in the catacombs of Egypt, had buried their dead. What race, then, occupied the country after the destruction of the Assyrian palaces? At what period were these tombs made? What antiquity did their presence assign to the buildings beneath them? These are questions which I am yet unable to answer, and which must be left undecided until the origin and age of the contents of the tombs can be satisfactorily determined.'

It can little surprise us, after such revelations, made, as it were, out of the dust of the desert, that an Arab sheikh one day addressed Mr Layard as follows:—'Wonderful! wonderful! There is surely no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet. In the name of the Most High, tell me, oh Bey, what you are going to do with those stones? So many thousands of purses spent

upon such things! Can it be, as you say, that your people learn wisdom from them; or is it, as his reverence the *cadi* declares, that they are to go to the palace of your queen, who, with the rest of the unbelievers, worships these idols? As for wisdom, these figures will not teach you to make any better knives, or scissors, or chintzes; and it is in the making of those things that the English show their wisdom. But God is great! God is great! Here are stones which have been buried ever since the time of the holy Noah—peace be with him! Perhaps they were under ground before the deluge. I have lived on these lands for years. My father, and the father of my father, pitched their tents here before me; but they never heard of these figures. For twelve hundred years have the true believers (and, praise be to God! all true wisdom is with them alone) been settled in this country, and none of them ever heard of a palace under ground. Neither did they who went before them. But lo! here comes a Frank from many days' journey off, and he walks up to the very place, and he takes a stick (illustrating the description at the same time with the point of his spear), and makes a line here, and makes a line there. Here, says he, is the palace; there, says he, is the gate; and he shows us what has been all our lives beneath our feet, without our having known anything about it. Wonderful! wonderful! Is it by books, is it by magic, is it by your prophets, that you have learnt these things? Speak, oh Bey: tell me the secret of wisdom.'

Mr Layard has some interesting remarks on the state of imitative art among the ancient Assyrians. 'It is impossible,' he says, 'to examine the monuments of Assyria without being convinced that the people who raised them had acquired a skill in sculpture and painting, and a knowledge of design, and even composition, indicating an advanced state of civilisation. It is very remarkable that the most ancient ruins show this knowledge in the greatest perfection attained by the Assyrians. The bas-relief representing the lion-hunt, now in the British Museum, is a good illustration of the earliest school of Assyrian art yet known. It far exceeds the sculptures of Khorsabad, Kouyunjik, or the later palaces of Nimroud, in the vigour of the treatment, the elegance of the forms, and in what the French aptly term "*mouvement*." At the same time it is eminently distinguished from them by the evident attempt at composition—by the artistical arrangement of the groups. The sculptors who worked at Khorsabad and Kouyunjik had perhaps acquired more skill in handling their tools. Their work is frequently superior to that of the earlier artist in delicacy of execution—in the details of the features, for instance—and in the boldness of the relief; but the slightest acquaintance with Assyrian monuments will show that they were greatly inferior to their ancestors in the higher branches of art—in the treatment of a subject, and in beauty and variety of form. This decline of art, after suddenly attaining its greatest perfection in its earliest stage, is a fact presented by almost every people, ancient and modern, with which we are acquainted. In Egypt, the most ancient monuments display the purest forms and the most elegant decorations. A rapid retrogression, after a certain period, is most apparent, and serves to indicate approximately the epoch of most of her remains. In the history of Greek and Roman art, this sudden rise and rapid fall are equally apparent. Even changes in royal dynasties have had an influence upon art, as a glance at monuments of that part of the East of which we are specially treating will show. Thus the sculpture of Persia, as that of Assyria, was in its best state at the time of the earliest monarchs, and gradually declined until the fall of the empire. . . . This decline in art may be accounted for by supposing that, in the infancy of a people, or after the occurrence of any great event, having a very decided influence upon their manners, their religion, or their political state, nature was the chief, if not the only object of study. When a certain proficiency had been attained, and no violent changes

took place to shake the established order of things, the artist, instead of endeavouring to imitate that which he saw in nature, received as correct delineations the works of his predecessors, and made them his types and his models. In some countries, as in Egypt, religion may have contributed to this result. Whilst the imagination, as well as the hand, was fettered by prejudices, and even by laws, or whilst indolence or ignorance led to the mere servile copying of what had been done before, it may easily be conceived how rapidly a deviation from correctness of form would take place. As each copied the errors of those who preceded him, and added to them himself, it is not wonderful if, ere long, the whole became one great error. It is to be feared that this prescriptive love of imitation has exercised no less influence on modern art than it did upon the arts of the ancients.' Our author then proceeds to argue that art had advanced from Assyria to Asia Minor, and thence into Greece, where it was destined to attain its highest perfection.

The dissertation on the antiquity and leading personages and events of Assyria is, after all, so vague in its results, that we find it would little profit our readers to enter into it. We prefer bestowing the small remaining space at our disposal in making reference to Mr Layard's restoration, as it may be called, of ancient Nineveh. He insists that the mound of Nimroud is the remains of the principal feature of the city. 'It is probable that the great edifice in the north-west corner of the principal mound, was the temple or palace, or the two combined; the smaller houses were scattered around it, over the face of the country. To the palace was attached a park, or paradise, as it was called, in which was preserved game of various kinds for the diversion of the king. This enclosure, formed by walls and towers, may perhaps still be traced in the line of low mounds branching out from the principal ruin. Future monarchs added to the first building, and the centre palace arose by its side. As the population increased with the duration and prosperity of the empire, and by the forced immigration of conquered nations, the dimensions of the city increased also. A king founding a new dynasty, or anxious to perpetuate his fame by the erection of a new building, may have chosen a distant site. The city, gradually spreading, may at length have embraced such additional palaces. This appears to have been the case with Nineveh. Nimroud represents the original site of the city. To the first palace the son of its founder added a second, of which we have the ruins in the centre of the mound. He also built the edifice now covered by the great mound of Baasheikha, as the inscriptions on the bricks from that place prove. He founded at the same time a new city at Kalah Sherghat. A subsequent monarch again added to the palaces at Nimroud, and recorded the event on the pavement slabs, in the upper chambers of the western face of the mound. At a much later period, when the older palaces were already in ruins, edifices were erected on the sites now marked by the mounds of Khorsabad and Karamles. The son of their founder built the great palace at Kouyunjik, which must have exceeded those of his predecessors in extent and magnificence. His son was engaged in raising one more edifice at Nimroud—the previous palaces, as it has been shown, having been long before deserted or destroyed—when some great event, perhaps the fall of the empire, and destruction of the capital, prevented its completion.

'The city had now attained the dimensions assigned to it by the book of Jonah, and by Diodorus Siculus. If we take the four great mounds of Nimroud, Kouyunjik, Khorsabad, and Karamles, as the corners of a square, it will be found that its four sides correspond pretty accurately with the 480 stadia or 60 miles of the geographer, which make the three days' journey of the prophet. Within this space there are many large mounds, including the principal ruins in Assyria, such as Karakush, Baasheikha, Baazani, Hussein, Tel-Yara,

&c. &c.; and the face of the country is strewn with the remains of pottery, bricks, and other fragments.

'The space between the great public edifices was probably occupied by private houses, standing in the midst of gardens, and built at distances from one another; or forming streets which enclosed gardens of considerable extent, and even arable land. The absence of the remains of such buildings may easily be accounted for. They were constructed almost entirely of sun-dried bricks, and like the houses now built in the country, soon disappeared altogether when once abandoned, and allowed to fall into decay. The largest palaces would probably have remained undiscovered, had there not been the slabs of alabaster to show the walls. There is, however, sufficient to indicate that buildings were once spread over the space above-described; for besides the vast number of small mounds everywhere visible, scarcely a husbandman drives his plough over the soil without exposing the vestiges of former habitations. Each quarter of the city may have had its distinct name; hence the palace of Evorita, where Saracus destroyed himself; and the Mespila and Larissa of Xenophon, applied respectively to the ruins at Kouyunjik and Nimroud.

'Existing ruins thus show that Nineveh acquired its greatest extent in the time of the kings of the second dynasty; that is to say, of the kings mentioned in Scripture. It was then that Jonah visited it, and that reports of its size and magnificence were carried to the West, and gave rise to the traditions from which the Greek authors mainly derived the information handed down to us.'

'The interior of the Assyrian palace,' adds Mr Layard, 'must have been as magnificent as imposing. I have led the reader through its ruins, and he may judge of the impression its halls were calculated to make upon the stranger who, in the days of old, entered for the first time the abode of the Assyrian kings. He was ushered in through the portal guarded by the colossal lions or bulls of white alabaster. In the first hall, he found himself surrounded by the sculptured records of the empire. Battles, sieges, triumphs, the exploits of the chase, the ceremonies of religion, were portrayed on the walls, sculptured in alabaster, and painted in gorgeous colours. Under each picture were engraved, in characters filled up with bright copper, inscriptions describing the scenes represented. Above the sculptures were painted other events—the king, attended by his eunuchs and warriors, receiving his prisoners, entering into alliances with other monarchs, or performing some sacred duty. These representations were enclosed in coloured borders, of elaborate and elegant design. The emblematic tree, winged bulls, and monstrous animals, were conspicuous amongst the ornaments. At the upper end of the hall was the colossal figure of the king in adoration before the supreme deity, or receiving from his eunuch the holy cup. He was attended by warriors bearing his robes, and by the priests or presiding divinities. His robes, and those of his followers, were adorned with groups of figures, animals, and flowers, all painted with brilliant colours.

'The stranger trod upon alabaster slabs, each bearing an inscription, recording the titles, genealogy, and achievements of the great king. Several doorways, formed by gigantic winged lions or bulls, or by the figures of guardian deities, led into other apartments, which, again, opened into more distant halls. In each were new sculptures. On the walls of some were processions of colossal figures—armed men and eunuchs following the king, warriors laden with spoil, leading prisoners, or bearing presents and offerings to the gods. On the walls of others were portrayed the winged priests, or presiding divinities, standing before the sacred trees.

'The ceilings above him were divided into square compartments, painted with flowers, or with the figures of animals. Some were inlaid with ivory, each compartment being surrounded by elegant borders and



mouldings. The beams, as well as the sides of the chambers, may have been gilded, or even plated, with gold and silver; and the rarest woods, in which the cedar was conspicuous, were used for the woodwork. Square openings in the ceilings of the chambers admitted the light of day. A pleasing shadow was thrown over the sculptured walls, and gave a majestic expression to the human features of the colossal forms which guarded the entrances. Through these apertures was seen the bright blue of an Eastern sky, enclosed in a frame on which were painted, in vivid colours, the winged circle, in the midst of elegant ornaments, and the graceful forms of ideal animals.

These edifices, as it has been shown, were great national monuments, upon the walls of which were represented in sculpture, or inscribed in alphabetic characters, the chronicles of the empire. He who entered them might thus read the history, and learn the glory and triumphs of the nation. They served at the same time to bring continually to the remembrance of those who assembled within them on festive occasions, or for the celebration of religious ceremonies, the deeds of their ancestors, and the power and majesty of their gods.

It must be matter of regret that Mr Layard was cut short in his discoveries by the exhaustion of the limited funds placed at his disposal by the government; and that he was compelled not only to leave much unexplored, but to cover up again with earth many monuments which he had not the means of transporting to England. We take it upon us to say that, eager as many in our country are for a reduction of the public expenditure, few would grudge the few thousands required for such a purpose as this. We would hope that Mr Layard, whose whole proceedings are so creditable to him, and who, by his work, has already established a claim to the gratitude of all the intelligent part of the community, will ere long be encouraged to return to his labours, with a view to his giving us yet a further insight into the most ancient of Asiatic monarchies.

#### RICHARD HOODLESS, THE HORSE-SWIMMER.

We supposed we had heard of all sorts of heroes, but find ourselves to have been mistaken. A hero in humble life has been made known to us of quite a new order. This brave man, by name Richard Hoodless, following the occupation of a farmer near Grainthorpe on the coast of Lincolnshire, has for many years devoted himself to the saving of mariners from drowning, and this without any of the usual apparatus for succouring ships in distress. Unaided by such appliances, and unaccompanied by any living creature but his horse, Hoodless has been the means of saving many unfortunate sailors from perishing amidst the waves.

Cultivating a small piece of ground, which is, as it were, rescued from the sea, and almost cut off from the adjacent country by the badness of the roads, this remarkable man may be said to devote himself to the noble duty of saving human life. On the approach of stormy weather, he mounts to an opening in the top of his dwelling, and there, pointing his telescope to the tumultuous ocean, watches the approach of vessels towards the low and dangerous shores. By night or by day he is equally ready to perform his self-imposed duty. A ship is struggling amidst the terrible convulsion of waters; no human aid seems to be at hand; all on board give themselves up for lost, when something is at length seen to leave the shore, and to be making an effort to reach the vessel. Can it be possible?—a man on horseback! Yes, it is Richard Hoodless, coming to the rescue, seated on his old nag, an animal accustomed to these salt-water excursions! Onward the faithful horse swims and plunges, only turning for an instant

when a wave threatens to engulf him in its bosom. There is something grand in the struggle of both horse and man—the spirit of unselfishness eagerly trying to do its work. Success usually crowns the exertions of the horse and his rider. The ship is reached; Hoodless mounts two or three mariners *en croupe*, and taking them to dry land, returns for another instalment.

That a horse could be trained to these unpleasant and hazardous enterprises may seem somewhat surprising. But it appears that in reality no training is necessary: all depends on the skill and firmness of the rider. Hoodless declares he could manage the most unruly horse in the water; for that, as soon as the animal finds that he has lost his footing, and is obliged to swim, he becomes as obedient to the bridle as a boat is to its helm. The same thing is observed in this sagacious animal when being hoisted to the deck of a ship. He struggles vehemently at first against his impending fate; but the moment his feet fairly leave the pier, he is calm and motionless, as if knowing that resistance would compromise his safety in the aerial passage. The only plan which our hero adopts is, when meeting a particularly angry surf or swell, to turn his horse's head, bend forward, and allow the wave to roll over them. Were the horse to face the larger billows, and attempt to pierce them, the water would enter his nostrils, and render him breathless, by which he would be soon exhausted.

In the year 1833, Hoodless signalled himself by swimming his horse through a stormy sea to the wreck of the *Hermione*, and saving her crew, for which gallant service he afterwards received a testimonial from the Royal Humane Society. The words of the resolution passed by the society on this occasion may be transcribed, for they narrate a circumstance worthy of being widely known. 'It was resolved unanimously, that the noble courage and humanity displayed by Richard Hoodless for the preservation of the crew of the "*Hermione*" from drowning, when that vessel was wrecked near Donna Nook, on the coast of Lincolnshire, on the 31st of August 1833, and the praiseworthy manner in which he risked his life on that occasion, by swimming his horse through a heavy sea to the wreck, when it was found impossible to launch the life-boat, has called forth the lively admiration of the special general court, and justly entitles him to the honorary medallion of the institution, which is hereby unanimously adjudged to be presented to him at the ensuing anniversary festival.'

As it may not be generally understood that a horse can be made to perform the office of a life-boat, when vessels of that kind could not with safety be launched, the fact of Hoodless performing so many feats in the manner described cannot be too widely disseminated. On some occasions, we are informed, he swims by himself to the wreck; but more usually he goes on horseback, and is seldom unsuccessful in his efforts. About two years ago he saved the captain of a vessel and his wife, and ten seamen—some on the back of the horse, and others hanging on by the stirrups. Should a vessel be lying on her beam-ends, Hoodless requires to exercise great caution in making his approach, in consequence of the ropes and rigging concealed in the water. On one occasion he experienced much inconvenience on this account: he had secured two seamen, and was attempting to leave the vessel for the shore, but the horse could not move from the spot. After various ineffectual plunges, Hoodless discovered that the animal was entangled in a rope under water. What was to be done? The sea was in a tumult, and to dismount was scarcely possible. Fortunately, he at length picked up the rope with his foot, then instantly pulled a knife from his pocket, leaned forward into the water, cut the rope—no easy task in a stormy sea—and so got off with safety!

All honour to Farmer Richard Hoodless, who still in

his own unostentatious way, performs acts of humanity as singular as they are meritorious! Only by accident have we become acquainted with his name and deeds of heroism, and we could not deny ourselves the pleasure of giving them all the publicity in our power.

#### GOLD-FINDING IN CALIFORNIA.

THE Americans appear to have some additional and unexpected reasons for congratulating themselves on the recent acquisition of California from Mexico. In the northern part of this territory, in the month of April last, it was discovered that gold abounded in the beds of the rivers and in their alluvial borders, as well as in the rocks constituting the higher grounds. A large portion of the thinly-inhabited territory has since become a scene of busy gold-finding, for which perhaps no parallel exists in the history of any country. One is at first tempted to suppose the whole affair a popular delusion, or a deliberate exaggeration, after a well-known transatlantic manner; but such theories are not tenable. We have received a Boston newspaper (*Daily Evening Traveller*, December 11, 1848), containing such documents on the subject as put incredulity as to the very great abundance of gold found entirely to flight. One of them is a report by Colonel Mason of the United States army, written at his station of Monterey, on the 17th August, to acquaint his government with the particulars of the singular affair. Another is a similar report by Mr Larkin, the United States consul at San Francisco. Both are cool business-like narrations, apparently beyond reasonable suspicion; yet they fully support the accounts which rumour had already circulated respecting the mineral wealth which has so unexpectedly turned up.

The gold district at present under attention appears to be situated on an inlet near San Francisco, called the American Fork, and on the rivers flowing into it. The territory is public property, but this seems to be as yet no impediment to the multitude of adventurers now engaged in pursuit of the gold. The Sacramento, the Feather, the Bear, the San Joachin, are names of rivers alluded to in the reports as permeating the *placers*, or gold tract. Colonel Mason, who has personally examined the country, and witnessed the strange proceedings, says—'At the saw-mill, twenty-five miles above the lower washings, or fifty miles from Sutter's, the hills rise to about a thousand feet above the level of the Sacramento plain. Here a species of pine occurs, which led to the discovery of the gold. Captain Sutter feeling the great want of lumber, contracted in September last with a Mr Marshall to build a saw-mill at that place. It was erected in the course of the past winter and spring—a dam and race constructed; but when the water was let on the wheel, the tail race was found to be too narrow to permit the water to escape with sufficient rapidity. Mr Marshall, to save labour, let the water directly into the race with a strong current, so as to wash it wider and deeper. He effected his purpose, and a large bed of mud and gravel was carried to the foot of the race. One day Mr Marshall, as he was walking down the race to this deposit of mud, observed some glittering particles at its upper edge; he gathered a few, examined them, and became satisfied of their value. He then went to the fort, told Captain Sutter of his discovery, and they agreed to keep it secret until a certain grist mill of Sutter's was finished. It, however, got out, and spread like magic. Remarkable success attended the labours of the first explorers, and in a few weeks hundreds of men were drawn thither.'

The effect upon a population of settlers thinly scattered over a rude country, or clustered in a few seaside villages, can only be imagined by those who are acquainted with the activity and enterprise of the

American character. As soon as it was known that gold was literally to be had for the lifting in certain parts of the country, an almost universal abandonment of the common pursuits of life took place. It became impossible to retain a servant or clerk; the merchant ships, and even those of the government, were deserted in the harbours; the soldiers left their quarters without leave. Two newspapers ceased publication, because all concerned in them, from editor to printer's imp, had seen fit to set out a gold-hunting. Brickyards, saw-mills, and farms (*rauchos*), were left to solitude. The town of San Francisco became two-thirds depopulated. Mr Larkin says—'San Francisco has not a justice of the peace left. The second alcalde of Monterey to-day joins the keepers of our principal hotel, who have closed their office and house, and will leave to-morrow for the golden river. I saw on the ground a lawyer who was last year attorney-general for the king of the Sandwich Islands, digging and washing out his ounce and a-half per day; near him can be found most all his brethren of the long robe, working in the same occupation.'

In August it was calculated that four thousand persons were engaged in the finding of gold, one-half of them Indians; and it was believed that gold to the value of from thirty to fifty thousand dollars was found each day. Colonel Mason describes the people as living in tents, in bush arbours, or in the open air; and he says that, though many had large sums in gold about them, there was no such thing as crime known amongst them. The very facility of obtaining the desired metal, seemed to have made it not worth any one's while to take culpable methods of acquiring it.

With regard to the actual amount realised in individual cases, Mr Larkin gives some curious particulars. Speaking of a brief space which he spent at a place where there were eight men with two rude machines at work, he says—'The two evenings I saw these eight men bring to their tents the labour of the day. I suppose they made each fifty dollars per day: their own calculation was two pounds of gold a day—four ounces to a man—sixty-four dollars. I saw two brothers that worked together, and only worked by washing the dirt in a tin pan, weigh the gold they obtained in one day: the result was seven dollars to one, eighty-two dollars to the other. There were two reasons for this difference: one man worked less hours than the other, and by chance had ground less impregnated with gold. I give this statement as an extreme case. During my visit I was an interpreter for a native of Monterey, who was purchasing a machine or canoe. I first tried to purchase boards and hire a carpenter for him. There were but a few hundred feet of boards to be had; for these the owner asked me fifty dollars per hundred (500 dollars per M.), and a carpenter washing gold dust demanded fifty dollars per day for working. I at last purchased a log dug out, with a riddle and sieve made of willow boughs on it, for 120 dollars, payable in gold dust, at fourteen dollars per ounce. The owner excused himself for the price by saying he was two days making it, and even then demanded the use of it until sunset. My Californian has told me since, that himself, partner, and two Indians, obtained with this canoe eight ounces the first, and five ounces the second day.'

Colonel Mason speaks of what he saw on a stream called Weber's Creek:—'We found a great many people and Indians, some engaged in the bed of the stream, and others in the small side valleys that put into it. These latter are exceedingly rich, and two ounces were considered an ordinary yield for a day's work. A small gutter, not more than a hundred yards long by four feet wide and two or three feet deep, was pointed out to me as the one where two men—William Daly and Perry M'Coon—had, a short time before, obtained 17,000 dollars' worth of gold. Captain Weber informed me, that he knew that these two men had employed four white men and about a hundred Indians, and that at

the end of one week's work they paid off their party, and had left 10,000 dollars' worth of this gold. Another small ravine was shown me, from which had been taken upwards of 15,000 dollars' worth of gold. Hundreds of similar ravines, to all appearance, are as yet untouched. I could not have credited these reports had I not seen, in the abundance of the precious metal, evidence of their truth. Mr Neligh, an agent of Commodore Stockton, had been at work about three weeks in the neighbourhood, and showed me, in bags and bottles, over 2000 dollars' worth of gold; and Mr Lyman, a gentleman of education, and worthy of every credit, said he had been engaged, with four others, with a machine on the American Fork, just below Sutter's Mill; that they worked eight days; and that his share was at the rate of fifty dollars a day; but hearing that others were doing better at Weber's place, they had removed there, and were on the point of resuming operations. I might tell of hundreds of similar instances. But to illustrate how plentiful the gold was in the pockets of common labourers, I will mention a simple occurrence which took place in my presence when I was at Weber's store. This store was nothing but an arbour of bushes, under which he had exposed for sale goods and groceries suited to his customers. A man came in, picked up a box of Seidlitz powders, and asked its price. Captain Weber told him it was not for sale. The man offered an ounce of gold, but Captain Weber told him it only cost fifty cents, and he did not wish to sell it. The man then offered an ounce and a-half, when Captain Weber had to take it. The prices of all things are high, and yet Indians, who before hardly knew what a breech-cloth was, can now afford to buy the most gaudy dress.'

Colonel Mason describes the mode of washing out the gold where machines are used:—The cradle, as it is called, 'is on rockers, six or eight feet long, open at the foot, and at its head it has a coarse grate or sieve; the bottom is rounded, with small cleets nailed across. Four men are required to work this machine: one digs the ground in the bank close by the stream; another carries it to the cradle and empties it on the grate; a third gives a violent rocking motion to the machine; whilst a fourth dashes on water from the stream itself. The sieve keeps the coarse stones from entering the cradle, the current of water washes off the earthy matter, and the gravel is gradually carried out at the foot of the machine, leaving the gold mixed with a heavy fine black sand above the first cleets. The sand and gold mixed together are then drawn off through sugar holes into a pan below, are dried in the sun, and afterwards separated by blowing off the sand. A party of four men thus employed at the lower mines averaged one hundred dollars a day.' A simple plan followed by individuals is noticed by Mr Larkin:—'A person without a machine, after digging on one or two feet of the upper ground, near the water (in some cases they take the top earth), throws into a tin pan or wooden bowl a shovel full of loose dirt and stones; then placing the basin an inch under the water, continued to stir up the dirt with his hand in such a manner, that the running water will carry off the light earth, occasionally with his hand throwing out the stones: after an operation of this kind for twenty or thirty minutes, a spoonful of small black sand remains; this is on a handkerchief or cloth dried in the sun, the emerge is blown off, leaving the pure gold. I have the pleasure of enclosing a paper of this sand and gold, which I, from a bucket of dirt and stones, in half an hour standing at the edge of the water, washed out myself. The value of it may be two or three dollars.'

'The size of the gold,' he continues, 'depends in some measure upon the river from which it is taken; the banks of one river having larger grains of gold than another. I presume more than one-half of the gold put into pans or machines is washed out and goes down the stream; this is of no consequence to the washers, who care only for the present time. Some have formed com-

panies of four or five men, and have a rough-made machine put together in a day, which worked to much advantage; yet many prefer to work alone, with a wooden bowl or tin pan, worth fifteen or twenty cents in the States, but eight to sixteen dollars at the gold region. As the workmen continue, and materials can be obtained, improvements will take place in the mode of obtaining gold. At present it is obtained by standing in the water, and with much severe labour, or such as is called here severe labour.'

The latest report on the subject is from the Rev. Walter Colton, alcade of Monterey, dated 29th August. Our newspaper authority informs us that Mr Colton speaks to the same purpose as Colonel Mason, but refers more particularly to the abundance of gold in the hills, where it is found in rough jagged pieces, of a quarter or half an ounce in weight, and sometimes three ounces. New discoveries are daily extending the gold region. Mr Colton says that people are running about the country picking up gold out of the earth, just as hogs in a forest would root up ground nuts. They vary from one ounce to ten ounces a day: an ounce is worth from 16 to 18 dollars. One man is mentioned, whose profits from sixty Indians, employed in hunting gold, are at the rate of one dollar a minute. 'I know,' says Mr Colton, 'seven men who worked seven weeks and two days, Sundays excepted, on Feather River. They employed on an average fifty Indians, and got out in these seven weeks and two days 275 pounds of pure gold. I know the men, and have seen the gold, and know what they state to be a fact. I know ten other men who worked ten days in company, employed no Indians, and averaged in these ten days fifteen hundred dollars each. I know another man who got out of a basin in a rock, not larger than a wash-bowl, two pounds and a-half of gold in fifteen minutes. Not one of these statements would I believe, did I not know the men personally, and know them to be plain matter-of-fact men—men who open a vein of gold just as coolly as you would a potato hill.' Mr Colton estimates the amount extracted at a million of dollars a month. It appears that, meanwhile, from the cessation of regular industry, all articles of necessity are raised to extravagant prices, so that the government officers find it impossible to live on their pay.

As might be expected, the news has excited great sensation in New York and other parts of the Union. Three steamers and seven ships and barques had already, by the beginning of December, sailed for California, sailors readily consenting to go at a dollar a month, in their eagerness to get to the ground. About a dozen more vessels were expected soon to sail. It is, however, a long voyage, or rather double voyage—first 2500 miles sailing to the river Chagres, in the Isthmus of Panama; then a twenty-mile journey on mules; and after this a second voyage of 3500 miles to San Francisco. On the latter line steamers are to be placed.

It will remain to be seen whether this extraordinary windfall prove of any serious permanent benefit to America or any of her citizens. History shows that gold-finding has never yet been a permanently advantageous pursuit, and that there is nothing to be thoroughly depended upon for the benefit of men and nations, but hard work applied in an economical manner to the production of articles required for use. If America thrives by picking up the precious metal in the wilds of California, she will be an exception from a pretty well-established rule.

#### INDIAN BHANG.

No one who has lived in India, and is acquainted with Asiatic manners and customs, can fail to be struck, when he reads Stephen Barrow, and such modern writers, by the great similarity which exists between the Egyptian and the Hindoo. The hieroglyphics depicted in the tableaux of ancient lore—the pictures of implements of husbandry, household furniture, manner of irrigating the land, carrying water—all tell the same



tale; and the conviction remains forcibly upon the mind, that the two nations must have had the same origin, or have been closely united, perhaps by traffic, in days gone by. The use of hashish (described in Journal, No. 256) is common to both, and serves as another connecting link.

The hashish or bhang is used by the Hindoo because fermented and spirituous liquors are forbidden by his religion, although they are given to the gods as offerings, by placing them behind the idol, and out of human sight. Although even the Brahmin not unfrequently partakes of bhang, those who indulge in it are looked upon in the light of debauchees; and sober folk shake their heads at them, and bhangie and ganja khore are opprobrious terms.

Bhang is the leaf of the male plant of the hemp, dried in the sun; when fresh, the leaf has a pleasing odour; but I am not certain whether it retains it when dried. Ganja is the same leaf; but being rubbed down in the hand to powder, and smoked in a *nariella* (a kind of hookah), retains the name of the plant; and the epithet of *churres* is given to the dried flower and stamen, which must naturally be more delicate and scarce, and on that account dearer. Churres is frequently made into tablet and *luddos*, or balls of sugar-candy—a dainty sweetmeat for the Hindoo, who gets bemused as he sucks or nibbles the sweets; and I have heard the feeling they occasion described by a friend as that of being plunged into a pleasing reverie, which was, however, every now and then broken by a sensation of being hoisted up into the air, and let down again with a shock.

The preparing a *lotah*, or jug of bhang, is accompanied by as much joviality and gossip among the partakers as the mixing of a bowl of punch or negus is with us; and many a time have I noticed an old favourite servant as he sat over the orgies of the bhang. Wherever Peerun travelled, his bundle of bhang went with him; and at mid-day, after his ablution and *poofah*, and lunch of parched rice or peas, a stone mortar and a wooden thiel, made of hard baubul, or thorn-wood, were produced, at the sight of which a few favourite friends or fellow-servants speedily collected. The humblest of these would undertake the pulverising of the leaf, which was done by rapid friction in the stone mortar with the wooden pestle. This was accomplished in about ten minutes, and water being poured over it, the liquid was strained through a piece of muslin; to this was added some sugar, and sometimes ginger or pepper, to make it more palatable. The host generally took a draught himself first, taking care, as usual, not to touch the *lotah*, or brass goblet, with his lips; but sitting on his haunches, and putting back his head, allowing the favourite beverage to slide down his gullet. His humble friends generally got each a small brass *cotorah*, or cupful, and drank it with relish and applause. The party soon after dispersed, and Peerun was seldom fit for any work or business after this: his eyes became bloodshot, his speech thick, his mind confused; in a word, he became drunk, and retired to his hut, or, on a march, he took himself to the shade of a tree; and there he dozed or slumbered, and enjoyed his reveries till three or four hours sobered him again. He then bustled about, and began to think of a regular meal, which was always cooked by his own hands about the gloaming.

Although a daily bibber of bhang, Peerun was a faithful and trustworthy servant, and in good circumstances; and when known to me, the noxious weed had not impaired either his health or intellect. But this is not always the case: the bhangie and ganja khore must be able to live well and comfortably: he must have plenty of milk and *ghee* (clarified butter), and not be stinted in food, otherwise he grows lean and withered—his hands and feet become long and attenuated, his eyes dull, and the white of the eye yellow and bloodshot. Costiveness is also a consequence, and the poor debauchee at last falls a sacrifice to his favourite drug. Bhang is not a cheap luxury: it costs the Bengalee as much as our Souchong costs us; and considering the

poor circumstances of the Indian, it occasions him a greater outlay than tea does here to a comfortable householder. A ganja khore and bhang bibber may frequently, therefore, be known by his rags and hungry look. Smoking does not produce so great a degree of intoxication as drinking, but the same evils follow in its train. However strange and incredible it may appear, I will not hesitate to relate a fact which I witnessed during a march; namely, the giving of a small portion of bhang to some working bullocks. The oxen were in beautiful condition; and upon remonstrating with the man under whose charge they were, as to the bad effects the drug might have, he only laughed at my fears, and maintained that the bullocks, after being shampooed and currycombed, looked to their dram to invigorate them, as a hungry man to his food, and that they could stand their work and fatigue all the better for it—with what *truth* I never had time to investigate thoroughly, as I lost sight of the man and his cattle after the march was finished. Giving bhang to cattle is, however, not a common thing, and may therefore be known to few Europeans.

Native doctors occasionally use bhang externally as a medicament, as we do laudanum, to deaden pain. It is tied in a bundle, warmed at the fire, and applied as a fomentation.

The *datura* or *stramonium* is a common weed in Hindoostan; and, like the foxglove, delights in a rich and moist soil. Who that saw it in all its beauty, clad with large white, trumpet-shaped, sweet-smelling flowers, would think that death and insanity may be brought on by its thorny apple, or rather the seed contained in the apple of this beautiful plant. It is a well-known poison to the Bengalee, who mixes it in small quantities with the rum which he sells to the European soldier, and gives it in large doses to an enemy whose mental powers he wishes to destroy for ever; and *certainly*, when not counteracted in time, the derangement of the brain brought on by *datura* becomes lasting. I have seen raving madness, melancholy madness, and merry madness, all produced by the use of this drug: according to the constitution, the poison acted differently.

In one gentleman's family I witnessed a case in point. A Hookaberdar, who had been concerned in robbing a female, had clandestinely brought the property home; not undetected, however, by some of his fellow-servants. The woman suspected him, took out a warrant, and his master's premises were searched; but the cunning thief had thrown the purloined jewels into a well, which, on account of its brackish water, was in disuse in the household, and consequently it had almost got dry, and choked up with weeds and bushes. The police were unsuccessful in their search; but two of the servants, who knew of the well, threatened to inform unless they received a douceur. The pipeman therefore mixed up a large dose of *datura* seed, ground to powder, with their curry; of which, being mess-fellows, they both partook.

In a short time the cook began to rave about roasts and puddings, and although it was night, began to sweep out the kitchen, and make noisy preparations for the mid-day meal. The other man, who was a sort of valet, and had charge of his master's wardrobe, came up stairs, pretended he heard the bugle, and insisted upon laying out the clothes and accoutrements for parade, and in his confusion of mind upset the boxes and toilet of his master. All this of course occasioned a great stir and disturbance in the household. The patients, however, were not allowed to go on in their mad career, but were separately shut up for the night by the master's direction, and medical aid was procured for them in the morning. Cooling salts, lime-juice and water, also vinegar and water, were prescribed, with the frequent use of the shower-bath; which measures were successful, restoring in a few days the patients to sanity. I may add that ample evidence being produced against him, the Hookaberdar was brought to condign punishment, set to work on the road, and disgraced for life.

## BRINGING IN THE NEW YEAR IN GERMANY.

There is plenty of dancing going on in Germany. Glee-wine, a sort of nogus and punch, is brought in after supper, and just before twelve o'clock. Every one is on the watch to win the New Year from the others—that is, to announce the New Year first. Accordingly, the instant the city bell is heard to commence tolling, 'Prost Neu Jahr!' starts from every one's lips; and happy is he who is acknowledged to have made the exclamation first, and to have won from all the others the New Year. In every house at that moment, all over the country, is shouted 'Prost Neu Jahr!' 'prost' being no German word, but a contraction of the Latin *prosit*. On one occasion, having retired to rest, our servants assembled at our room door and woke us, in order to cry 'Prost Neu Jahr!' On the following morning, every one that meets you salutes you with the same exclamation. With the glee-wine are brought in, on a waiter, the New-Year wishes of the family and its friends. These are written in verse, generally on very ornamented gilt note-paper, and sealed up. When the Prost Neu Jahr has passed, and all have drunk to one another a happy New Year, with a general touching of glasses, these are opened and read. For the most part they are without signatures, and occasion much guessing and joking. Under cover of these anonymous epistles, good hints and advice are often administered by parents and friends. Numbers of people, who never on any other occasion write a verse, now try their hands at one; and those who do not find themselves sufficiently inspired, present those ornamental cards of which I have spoken under Christmas, and which have all kinds of wishes, to suit all kinds of tastes and circumstances. These are to be purchased of all qualities and prices; and those sent by friends and lovers generally appear on New-Year's Day, and are signed or not, as suits the purpose of the sender.—*William Howitt's Rural and Domestic Life of Germany.*

## COFFEE-ROOMS AND READING ALOUD.

'There is only one thing you now want at — to complete your institutions for the good of the working-classes—a large, comfortable, well-lighted coffee-room with a good fire, where every workman, not finding in himself the taste or ability for science of any kind, might enjoy himself in an evening over a cup of coffee (nothing else being sold), and in listening to the reading by some young men in turn of amusing books—as the Arabian Nights' tales, Sir Walter Scott's novels, &c. &c. I have long thought all our plans for the good of working-men will be imperfect if we do not look to that large class, too old and inert to begin to study science, and unable or unused to read, but of which many might be weaned from the ale-house if the enjoyments of a clean room, blazing fire, and cup of hot drink for two-pence were offered them, with the substitution of listening to amusing reading, instead of the thrice-told yarns of their pot-house companions. My attention was first directed to this matter by Sir John Herschel's very striking anecdote of the labourers in a village who assembled every night at the blacksmith's shop to hear one of them read Richardson's "Pamela," the history of whose fortunes attracted so numerous and constant an auditory, and excited so intense an interest, that when, after many weeks' reading, the tale was finished, the whole party adjourned to the church and rang a merry peal, to express their delight at the heroine's triumphant success over all her temptations. Now if the blacksmith's shop, in spite of the anvil's din, and sparks, and without the attraction of ale and gossip, could thus nightly bring together an eager company, why should not a snug warm coffee-room, with the similar banquet of an interesting tale? There would be no difficulty in finding competent readers among the better-educated class of young men, who could scarcely more effectually serve the cause of morality, and indeed of knowledge; for, by degrees, for mere light reading might be substituted voyages, such as Anson's, &c. which Somerville tells us in his autobiography were sufficient attraction, when read by him aloud in harvest at dinner-time, to surround him by a crowd of listeners.—*Extract of a Letter.* [We have, on former occasions, recommended the plan here described. It still has our best wishes; but we have been sorry to learn that in one large town in Scotland, where it was tried by a person of remarkable energy, the working-classes did not take so much advantage of the benefits held out to them, as might have been expected.]

## SONNET.

To L.—CHRISTMAS, 1848.

How shall I crown thy uncomplaining brow,  
Sweet shape of my day-dreamings! when I built  
Young Edens for thee? Look where'er thou wilt,  
'Tis the same wayward world of wail and wo.  
Bright flowers I would have brought thee, but they blow  
In the sun only, and but blow to die:  
Our day is sunless—wintry is our sky;  
And so I have chosen thee better. Christmas, lo!  
Here plucks them for thee. Ivy, ever green,  
Winter or summer, clinging still the same  
To old as young—to ruined as to new;  
And thorny holly, but these thorns between  
Bright berries, peeping with their eyes of flame.  
Such crown be thine! Like thee 'tis cheerful, constant, true.

M. S. J.

## INTELLIGENCE IN A FISH.

At a recent meeting of the Liverpool Philosophical Society, Dr Warwick related an extraordinary instance of intelligence in a fish. 'When he resided at Durham, the seat of the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, he was walking one evening in the park, and came to a pond where fish intended for the table were temporarily kept. He took particular notice of a fine pike, of about six pounds weight, which, when it observed him, darted hastily away. In so doing, it struck its head against a tenterhook in a post (of which there were several in the pond, placed to prevent poaching), and, as it afterwards appeared, fractured its skull, and turned the optic nerve on one side. The agony evinced by the animal appeared most horrible. It rushed to the bottom, and boring its head into the mud, whirled itself round with such velocity that it was almost lost to the sight for a short interval. It then plunged about the pond, and at length threw itself completely out of the water on to the bank. He (the doctor) went and examined it, and found that a very small portion of the brain was protruding from the fracture in the skull. He carefully replaced this, and with a small silver tooth-pick, raised the indented portion of the skull. The fish remained still for a short time, and he then put it again into the pond. It appeared at first a good deal relieved; but in a few minutes it again darted and plunged about, until it threw itself out of the water a second time. A second time Dr Warwick did what he could to relieve it, and again put it into the water. It continued for several times to throw itself out of the pond, and with the assistance of the keeper, the doctor at length made a kind of pillow for the fish, which was then left in the pond to its fate. Upon making his appearance at the pond on the following morning, the pike came towards him to the edge of the water, and actually laid its head upon his foot. The doctor thought this most extraordinary; but he examined the fish's skull, and found it going on all right. He then walked backwards and forwards along the edge of the pond for some time, and the fish continued to swim up and down, turning whenever he turned; but being blind on the wounded side of its skull, it always appeared agitated when it had that side towards the bank, as it could not then see its benefactor. On the next day he took some young friends down to see the fish, which came to him as usual; and at length he actually taught the pike to come to him at his whistle, and feed out of his hands. With other persons it continued as shy as fish usually are. He (Dr Warwick) thought this a most remarkable instance of gratitude in a fish for a benefit received; and as it always came at his whistle, it proved also what he had previously, with other naturalists, disbelieved—that fishes are sensible to sound.'

## CHANGE OF OPINION.

He that never changed any of his opinions, never corrected any of his mistakes; and he who was never wise enough to find out any mistakes in himself, will not be charitable enough to excuse what he reckons mistakes in others.—*Dr Whicote.*

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